

Additional Criteria for a Technology Supported Learning Training Center of Excellence (TSL COE)

The intent of establishing training Centers of Excellence (COE) is to save money by reducing redundant course development and maintenance efforts. This may be accomplished by centralizing these functions to a small number of topical areas. Subject matter expertise and natural leadership positioning within a given topical area are prime considerations. Quality and systems processes such as use of the Systems Approach to Training (SAT), competent program and financial management, and customer service/marketing are also very important.

While it does share the non-content criteria, a TSL COE does not need to have expertise in specific content areas. As a part of the Corporate Technology Supported Learning Program, which cross-cuts content area, there are a number of additional criteria that should be used to assess a candidate's suitability. Ideally, a candidate organization:

1. Manifests solid TSL development and implementation program management.

Good project management is a vital prerequisite for securing and maintaining skilled TSL technicians. TSL implementation is demanding and mistakes can be very costly.

2. Has proven experience as a corporate player—understands and strongly advocates the corporate approach to training.

The COE needs a hands-on, visible, proactive, Federal employee in the lead. The initial goals of TSL are closely tied to Federal training needs and subsequently contractor needs. A COE needs to be very well informed and connected to the corporate TSL Program, the Training and Development Coordinating Group (TDCG), the Training and Development Management Council (TDMC), and the Information Management (IM) organization.

3. Functions as a team player—understands the Corporate TSL Program.

The TSL COE needs to directly support the Corporate TSL Program. It also understands MA-31's lead corporate role and their subsequent interplay with IM and the Federal Training and Technology (FTT) partnerships.

4. Markets services to other COEs first with a focus on cross-cutting needs and courses.

The TSL COE should first seek to market its services with other COEs. The TSL COE's role is to help other COEs do effective front-end analysis, delivery method selection, and where appropriate, consult/broker/subcontract in the development and implementation of Technology Supported Learning.

5. Works closely with the Corporate TSL Program to find the most advantageous TSL opportunities.

The TSL COE should work with the Corporate TSL program, the TDCG, and the TDMC to address cross-cutting courses that would be appropriate for TSL delivery.

6. Needs to be open and versatile with regard to the various TSL options.

The TSL COE should be knowledgeable in the various technologies (i.e. computer-based, web-based, ITV, etc.). More importantly, it needs to be expert in understanding the cost-effectiveness and capabilities of all proven approaches. The TSL COE also needs to be intimately familiar with corporate capabilities, infrastructure constraints and plans, delivery costs, etc. While the primary spotlight seems to be on web-based delivery, DOE has a significant ITV capability that should be considered during delivery selection. LANs, Intranets, or CD-ROM-based applications may be more appropriate for near-term, whether or not web browsers are used. Selection of the appropriate delivery mechanism must be based on a comprehensive understanding of the available tools.

7. Constructs, maintains, and utilizes a network of experts.

The TSL COE should, ideally, serve as the hub of a complex-wide network of qualified TSL experts who could provide assistance with the various analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation phases of new or existing efforts.

8. Utilizes or selects most capable technology provider(s).

It is not in DOE's best interest to have a single organization/entity monopolize the TSL efforts. Future local organizational needs will necessitate a collaborative effort complex-wide and sharing resources will be critical.

9. Shares resources.

The TSL COE will promote the exchange of resources complex-wide through shared abilities and capabilities. It will assist analysts, designers and developers with their process needs through this technology exchange.

10. Corporately markets and manages finances.

The TSL COE has a unique challenge in finding ways to market front-end analysis and design services, in addition to potential development and implementation services. Policies must be developed to promote investments with reasonable returns that may not be immediate. TSL has high upfront costs with cost avoidance benefits (i.e. reduced travel and time spent in training.) The TSL COE must work with the TDMC to establish methods for capitalizing on these long term return on investment opportunities.